

HACKNEY
COUNCIL

&

THE POLICE

Fact & Fiction

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**There is a myth going around
that Hackney Council
doesn't believe in having a police force.**

**The truth is
that we are in favour of good policing
and against bad policing.**

LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY



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HACKNEY COUNCIL'S POLICE COMMITTEE AND ITS SUPPORT UNIT COUNCIL POLICIES ON POLICING

F I C T I O N

● Won't speak to the police

F A C T

On the contrary Hackney Council meets the police regularly to put forward the views of local people.

● Police out of schools

This is a lie. Schools in Hackney are controlled by the Inner London Education Authority not Hackney Council. Any decision about police presence in any school is made by that school's Board of Governors.

● Police off estates

Quite the opposite, the council has on many occasions complained about the lack of police patrols on council estates. We have demanded that council tenants living on estates be given the same level of protection as everyone else.

● Against Neighbourhood Watch

Hackney Council is not so much against Neighbourhood Watch, as of the opinion that the council can do considerably better by creating genuine involvement by the community in looking after their own neighbourhood.

● Wants to dictate to the police

Hackney Council believes that you should have some say in how you are policed. Policing in Hackney should reflect the

HACKNEY COUNCIL'S POLICE COMMITTEE AND ITS SUPPORT UNIT

F I C T I O N

F A C T

needs of *your street, your estate, and your community*. This is what the police accountability argument is all about.

● *Anti-police*

The Police Committee was set up because *your local councillors* are obliged by law to *make you pay* for local policing – over £7 million last year. The Committee was established as a way of seeing that *your money* was well spent.

● *New fangled*

The idea that the police should be accountable to local people is not new. Except for London's Metropolitan Police force *every other* police force in England and Wales has had some kind of locally elected police authority since Queen Victoria's time. Ideally Hackney Council would like to see a fully elected police authority for London that is more powerful than present arrangements outside the capital, but the idea is not "anti-police": in the USA, and many European countries the police are locally accountable, in this way.

HACKNEY COUNCIL'S POLICE COMMITTEE AND ITS SUPPORT UNIT

F I C T I O N

F A C T

● *Political*

The issue is not day to day control, but who the police answer to for their general policies. The police are already under "political" control in the sense that they are accountable to an elected representative of the people, as is proper in a democratic country.

Unlike the rest of England however, London's police are controlled by a single national politician – the Home Secretary. This is an MP who doesn't have to live in London and doesn't need to worry about Londoner's votes – the present one represents part of Oxfordshire!

Hackney Council wants local people to have a say in how they are policed. All the council wants to see is a locally elected police authority for London, with only such powers as already exists in the hands of the Home Secretary.

● *Extremist*

All of Hackney Council's committees consist of local councillors elected by you in free, open, democratic elections. Just to make doubly sure no one is left out, there are eight extra

HACKNEY COUNCIL'S POLICE COMMITTEE AND ITS SUPPORT UNIT

F I C T I O N

F A C T

seats on the police committee for community groups in the borough such as the Community Relations Council. If the police were willing, arrangements could be made for them to have co-opted representation.

All meetings are open to any member of the public, and all debates take place in an open democratic way. The police receive the agendas and minutes of all council Police Committee meetings.

●Expensive

Your local councillors need a small team of people knowledgeable about policing to help them keep tabs on how *your* money is being spent by the police. The police have asked for almost seven million pounds this year from Hackney rate-payers. Your Police Committee Support Unit costs each Hackney resident only 34p a year.

●Hampers fight against crime

Hackney Council has got an important role to play in helping to prevent crime. Council initiatives such as those on racial harassment, and the environmental health noisy party patrol

HACKNEY COUNCIL'S POLICE COMMITTEE AND ITS SUPPORT UNIT

F I C T I O N

F A C T

have attracted praise from various sections of the police.

● *Useless propaganda*

Hackney Police Committee Support Unit provides a wide variety of publications telling people about their rights, and changes in the law that have consequences for *your* everyday life. Hundreds of local people have come to the Unit for help and advice on police related issues. These are the concerns that the Police Committee discusses. The reports of the Police Committee are public property which can be read and criticised by anyone. You will have seen in your local papers that our reports have provoked lively debates.

SINCE IT WAS SET UP IN 1983, HACKNEY COUNCIL POLICE COMMITTEE SUPPORT UNIT HAS:

- 1** Provided help and assistance to people wishing to make a complaint against the police or who face police harassment.
- 2** Helped to set up a victim support scheme for victims of unreported crimes, racist attacks and violence against women.
- 3** Kept the local communities informed on policing issues and how it affects them, and promoted an informed discussion on these issues.
- 4** Worked with other council departments to develop council policies to combat crime through the installation of better security measures in homes and council estates and on other crime prevention measures. Particular attention is to be given to the setting up of a Community Safety Panel which will look at different types of crime in the borough and assess what practical help the council can give to local residents who suffer from any of these crimes.
- 5** Played a part in developing council policies to combat racial harassment and violence against women.
- 6** Developed a Community Charter for Better Policing in the borough which reflects community concerns and attempts to get the police to respond more effectively to their concerns.
- 7** Continued to fight for police accountability, in line with the belief that you, as the local ratepayer who pays for policing services, should have some say in how you are policed.

HACKNEY COUNCIL POLICE COMMITTEE AND ITS SUPPORT UNIT CAN HELP YOU IN A NUMBER OF WAYS:

1

We can provide help and advice if you have any complaints or concerns about policing and crime on your estate, or in your street or community etc.

2

We can provide practical assistance and support if you have been racially attacked, sexually harassed or been the victim of other crimes e.g. burglary, street attacks, and cannot get any response from the police or are unsatisfied with the response.

3

We can provide you with information on police powers, police legislation and your legal rights. We can also provide information on general civil liberties issues or any specific information you want on policing matters and crime.

4

We can give you help and advice on crime prevention measures and how to get a better policing response in your area.

5

We can provide help and assistance if you have been the victim of deportation and immigration raids, or suspected maltreatment and abuse of power, by the police. We can also provide advice on appropriate civil, criminal and other remedies.

Hackney Council Police Committee can be contacted through the Police Committee Support Unit at the Town Hall in Mare Street, London E8. Please use the tear off slip if you want to get in touch with us. Please also feel free to ring us if you have any worries or concerns on policing and crime matters.

**Please tick as appropriate
and return the slip to:**

**Police Committee Support Unit
Hackney Council
Town Hall
Mare Street
London E8 1EA**

986 3123 X 278/280.

- I/We would like more information about the Police Committee and its work.
- I/We would like to be on your mailing list to receive copies of council reports and other publications on policing and crimes issues.
- I/We would like a speaker on policing issues in the borough to attend a meeting of our organisation:

Name:

Organisation:

Address:

Telephone:



Publication number 4



HACKNEY COUNCIL
Working for local people